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ABSTRACT

This document provides an analysis of the 1997 and 1998 Sacramento environmental scans completed by Los Rios Community College District (California). Findings include: (1) new high school graduates and new older students are, on average, earning GPAs and success rates that are below average for all students; (2) specific Los Rios ethnic minority student groups, such as African American and Latino, achieve course completion rates that are much lower than those achieved by Asian and white students in Los Rios colleges, by 10% or more; (3) high school graduates are a rapidly growing population sector; and (4) for the past four-year period, an average of 6% of all Los Rios students earned degrees and certificates, while an average of 39% of all students had goals to earn degrees or certificates. Other findings were that, among the 25 fastest growing occupations, 50% of the average annual openings require a community college education; this is projected to continue at least through the year 2005. The report recommends that measures be taken to improve the rates at which students obtain degrees and certificates and to find ways to help ethnic minority students become more successful. Contains 12 charts. (JA)

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Key Issues for Planning from the 1997 and 1998 Environmental Scans

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July 1998
Los Rios Community College District

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Los Rios Community College District
Office of Institutional Research

KEY ISSUES FOR PLANNING FROM THE 1997 AND 1998 ENVIRONMENTAL SCANS

July 1998

The 1997 Environmental Scan of the Greater Sacramento Area completed by the Los Rios Community College District Office of Institutional Research (IR) provides a scan of the *external environment*. It outlines changes in the Greater Sacramento Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (the CMSA, which includes El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties) and beyond, that have broad implications for planning a direction for the district that will best serve the needs of students and the community.

The 1998 Environmental Scan Report Card provides a comprehensive *internal* review of the District's effectiveness in serving students. This includes a review of student access and various student success measures for all students and for students by gender, by ethnicity, by age, by informed matriculation goal, by new high school graduates who have enrolled, by new older students who have enrolled and by students enrolled in specific vocational education programs. In addition, it reviews data on employment of leavers that includes 1992-93 former vocational education students who were employed full-time. Later this year, additional information on completion rates for the 1994 first-time student cohort and on satisfaction of students enrolled in Spring 1998 with their Los Rios colleges' experiences will be added. Also to be added over the next year will be data on basic skills students who complete coursework at least one level above their initial precollegiate placement. With these additions, all of the performance measures reviewed by the District will comply with those established to date by the State of California and the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges Partnership for Excellence and for the annual measurement of institutional effectiveness.

Four of the most important findings of this analysis are the following.

1. **New high school graduates and new older students are, on average, earning GPAs and achieving success rates that are below the average for all students. But new high school graduates enrolling in Los Rios colleges persist from Fall to Spring at much higher rates (68%) than the average student (59%) and those with degree, certificate and transfer goals persist at even higher rates (81%). New older students, however, do not; only 56% with long-term goals to earn degrees, certificates or transfer persist.**

2. **Specific Los Rios ethnic minority student groups (African American, Native American, Latino, Filipino and Pacific Islander) achieve course completion rates that are much lower than those achieved by Asian and white students in Los Rios colleges, by 10% or more. Of particular concern is that our African American students are performing below the statewide average in successfully completing the courses that they take.**

3. **High school graduates are a rapidly growing population sector. As such, in the foreseeable future, Los Rios colleges are likely to be enrolling a growing number of new, young students.**

4. **For the past four-year period, an average 6% of all Los Rios students earned degrees and certificates, while an average 39% of all students had goals to earn degrees or certificates. Although enrollment data are not *directly* comparable to awards data, these four-year averages do provide a relative means of comparison, suggesting that of those students with goals to earn degrees and certificates an estimated 15% actually earn them. Student Right to Know cohort data (soon to be released) will provide the most accurate information available on students with degree and certificate goals who actually earn them.**

These and other findings are detailed below and indicate that measures need to be taken to improve the rates at which our students obtain degrees and certificates and to find ways to help ethnic minority students generally considered to be under-represented in institutions of higher education to become more successful, particularly those who are African American.

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Greater Sacramento Economy

- Rapid growth is occurring and projected to continue in the professional, paraprofessional and technical occupations, with computer engineering and other computer-related jobs leading the way among these broader occupational categories.

- Among the 25 fastest growing occupations (rated by percent growth), 50% of the average annual openings require a community college education; this is projected to continue at least through the year 2005.

- The diverse, knowledge-based economy of the region continues to rapidly evolve. This economy requires workers who must begin their careers with more education than in the past. Moreover, because of the rapidly changing economy, this workforce must be educated over, and over and over, again, as skill requirements change on an on-going basis.

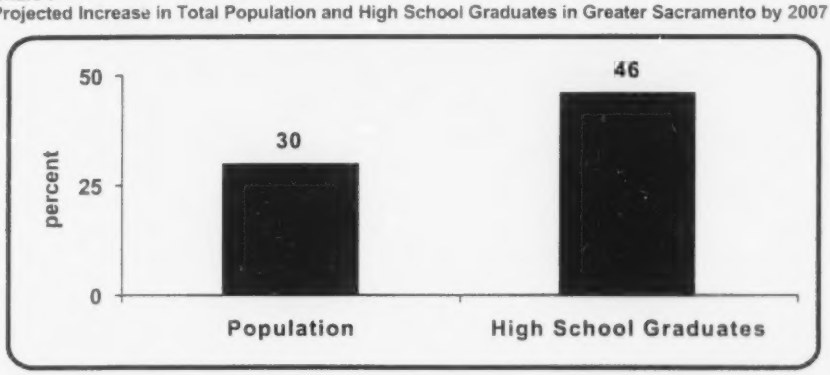
- As such, more residents will need the educational services of community colleges than in the past, if the economy is going to sustain the level of change that is projected to occur.

Greater Sacramento Population Shifts

- Greater Sacramento's 1997 population of 1.66 million has grown by 49% since 1981 and is projected to grow over the next ten years by almost 30%, to 2.15 million in 2007.

- While total population in the Greater Sacramento CMSA is projected to increase 30%, the number of high school graduates are projected to increase by 46%. Because of this, Los Rios colleges may see a continuation of the current gradual shift toward an increasing number of younger students.

Chart 1
Projected Increase in Total Population and High School Graduates in Greater Sacramento by 2007



- As the population grows, it is becoming more ethnically diverse. The 69.5% white population of Sacramento County in 1990 is expected to drop to 63.8% by 2000; only half of Sacramento County's population will be white by 2030. Sacramento County accounts for 69% of the CMSA's total population.

- School age and high school graduate populations currently in the educational pipeline on their way to Los Rios colleges are where ethnic diversity is most pronounced. In 1996 ethnic minorities made up 29.3% of the four-county Sacramento area population, 34% of the high school graduate population and 40% of the total school-age population. These figures are much more pronounced for Sacramento County, home of 69% of the CMSA's total population. Ethnic minorities made up 40.6% of Sacramento County's 1996 public high school graduating classes and 48.6% of their total school-age population.

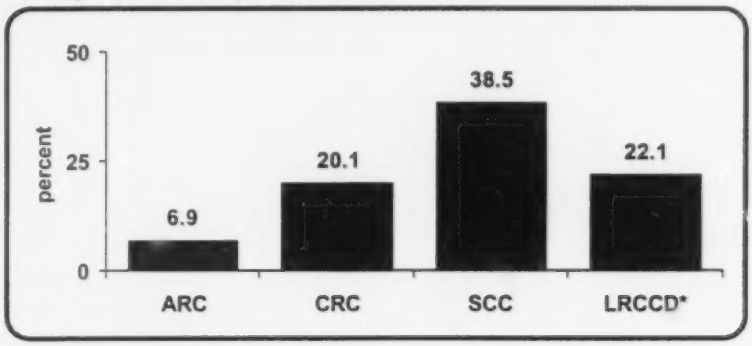
- An alarming proportion of the school-age population is at or below the poverty level. In 1994, 22.4% of Sacramento County's and 20% of Yolo County's children, ages 5-17 were in poverty. And 26.9% of all family households with children under the age of 18 in the Sacramento MSA were in single parent households in 1990. This compares to the state proportion of 23.9% and the national proportion of 22.8%.

- As such, in the foreseeable future, Los Rios colleges are likely to be enrolling a growing number of new, young students who are ethnic minorities. Some of these new students may also be either economically disadvantaged or educationally disadvantaged, and many may be both.

Los Rios Colleges Student Enrollment

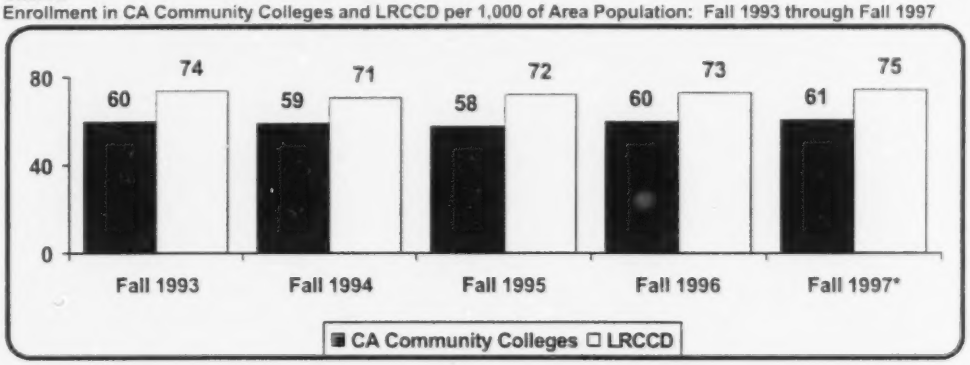
- In fact, new high school graduates enrolling at Los Rios colleges (a student group that takes a high unit load: an average 9.59 units in Fall 1997) have increased in large numbers over the most recent five-year period (from Fall 1993 to Fall 1997). The large increases in these students, however, occurred at CRC and SCC, the colleges located in the higher growth areas of the CMSA. Enrollment of new high school graduates increased by 20.1% at CRC and by 38.5% at SCC. Enrollment increases of new high school graduates at ARC increased by 6.9%. District-wide, the increase in the number of new graduates as unduplicate students was 22.1%.

Chart 2
Rate of Increase in the Number of New High School Graduates
Enrolling in Los Rios Colleges from Fall 1993 to Fall 1997



- Los Rios colleges serve a fairly large number of adults living in Greater Sacramento: enrollment per 1,000 population was an estimated 75 for Fall 1997. This compares with a statewide figure of 61.

Chart 3
Enrollment in CA Community Colleges and LRCCD per 1,000 of Area Population: Fall 1993 through Fall 1997



- Enrollment by ethnicity for specific groups has increased over this most recent five-year period: of African American students, by 16.6%, district-wide; of Asian students, by 21.5%; of Filipino students, by 14.8%; and of Pacific Islander students, by 56.3% students (however the numbers of Pacific Islanders are quite small: 533 in Fall 1997). The number of white students only increased by 3.2%. These increases, however, translate to a fairly small change in ethnic minority groups as a proportion of total enrollment: the number of ethnic minority students increased from 37.2% of all students in Fall 1993 to 39.9% of all students in Fall 1997; the number of white students declined from 58.5% of all students in Fall 1993 to 56.3% of all students in Fall 1997. The remaining proportions are students in other and unknown ethnic categories.

- Enrollment of Latino students increased by 7.4% from Fall 1993 to Fall 1997. This was somewhat less than the 9.6% increase in the Latino population of Greater Sacramento over a slightly different time period (1992 to 1996). Los Rios colleges do, however, enroll a substantial proportion of new high school graduates who are Latino. Whereas 11.3% of high school graduates were Latino in 1996, 13.8% of all new high school graduates who enrolled in our colleges the following semester were Latino.

- The Native American population changed very little, as was the case for Los Rios, with an enrollment change of 0.3%. Similarly, white student enrollment changed by only 3.2%.

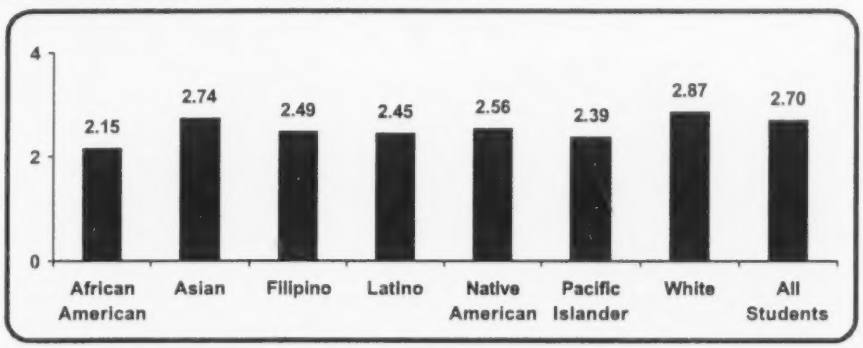
- Enrollment growth in the district from Fall 1993 to Fall 1997 was primarily in three age categories: students under 18 (by 61.8%); students ages 18-20 (by 13.6%) and students over 40 (30.4%). Whereas the students over 40 were primarily those taking a small number of units (an average 4.35 in Fall 1997) and performing well in them, it was the younger students, 18-20 consisting of mostly new high school graduates who took the largest number of units (9.95 in Fall 1997).

Student Success – Semester Course Success Rates and Average GPAs

- Successful course outcome measures do not vary too dramatically by gender or by goal. Where they do vary is by ethnicity.

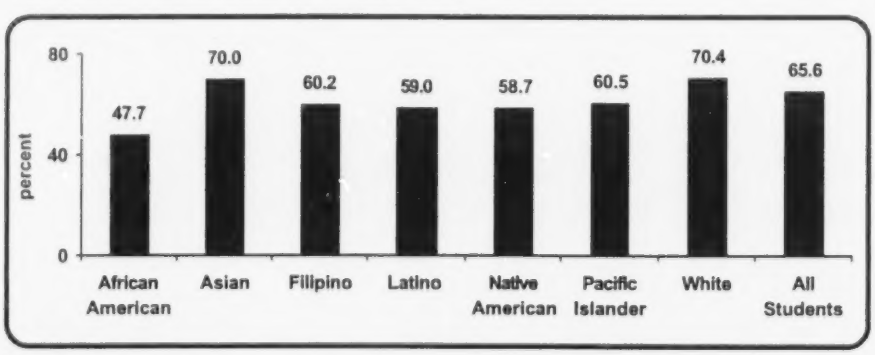
- Asian and white students earn GPAs and achieve success rates that are substantially higher than those achieved by other ethnic groups. Whereas the average GPA and success rate for all students in Fall 1997 were 2.70 and 65.6%, respectively, Asian and white students earned GPAs of 2.74 and 2.87, respectively; their success rates were 70.0% and 70.4%, respectively.

Chart 4
Average GPA of LRCCD Students by Ethnicity: Fall 1997



- All other ethnic groups achieved course completion rates that were lower than those of Asian and white students, by roughly 10% or more. In Fall 1997 Pacific Islander students successfully completed 60.5% of their courses, Filipinos successfully completed 60.2%, Latinos successfully completed 59.0%, Native Americans successfully completed 58.7% and African Americans successfully completed 47.7%.

Chart 5
Course Success Rate of LRCCD Students by Ethnicity: Fall 1997

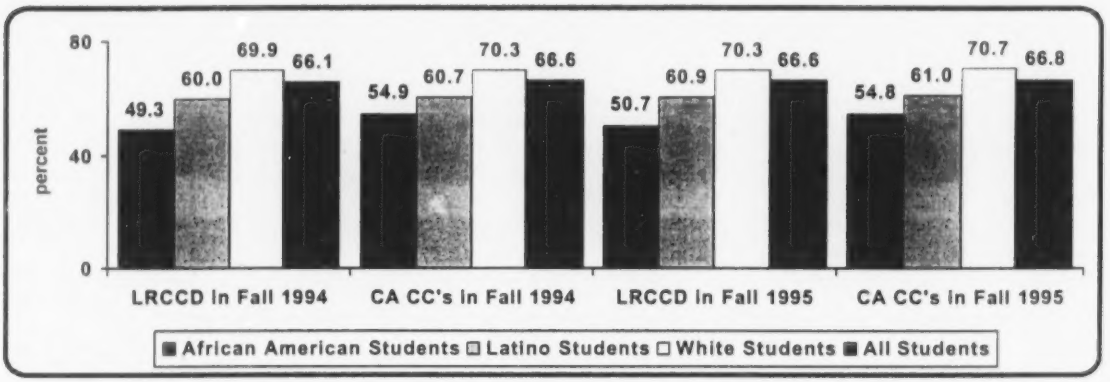


- Moreover, with the exception of Pacific Islander students, some of these student groups achieved rates that have been dropping over the five-year period under study (Fall 1993 through Fall 1997). Successful course completion rates of Latino students dropped by 5%, while those of both Native American and African American students dropped by 4%. Filipino students dropped by 5%. Pacific Islander students saw rates that improved

by 2% over the five-year period. The rates of Asian students, while still high, dropped by 2%; those of white students did not change much over this five-year period.

* Fall 1994 and Fall 1995 statewide course success rate comparisons are only available for African American, Latino and white students. This occurs because statewide figures represent combined data for Asian and Pacific Islander students and because analysis was not provided for Native Americans or Filipinos as separate categories of students. Statewide rates achieved by Latino students and by white students for both years are almost the same as those achieved by Los Rios students (they vary by less than 1% in all cases). But comparative rates for African American students are different: statewide rates for African Americans are 54.9% and 54.8% vs. Los Rios rates of 49.3% and 50.7%, respectively.

Chart 6
Semester Course Success Rates of Los Rios Students and All CA Community College Students: Fall 1994 and Fall 1995

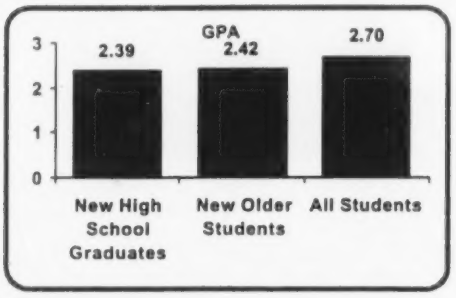


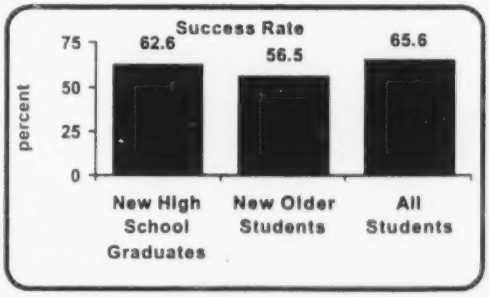
* Special initiatives to help boost successful course completion rates of Pacific Islander, Filipino, Latino, Native American and African American students may be in order. This may be particularly important for African American students who successfully completed only half of their courses, rates that were 4% to 6% lower than those achieved by African American students across the state during Fall 1993 and Fall 1994.

* New high school graduates achieved success rates that are 3% lower than the average for all students, but earned an average GPA that was much lower (2.39 vs. 2.70 in Fall 1997). It is the older students who take few units each Fall who complete their courses with high GPAs and achieve high success rates. All students in both the 30-39 and the 40 and over age categories earn GPAs over 3.00 and success rates over 72%.

* New older students (those 20 and older who earned their high school diplomas one or more years earlier than a given Fall semester and who have never taken college level courses) have been distinguished from the new high school graduates. This group also struggles, more than the average student, earning a GPA of 2.42 and successfully completing only 56.5% of their courses in Fall 1997.

Chart 7
Average GPAs and Success Rates of New High School Graduates, New Older Students and All Students: Fall 1997





* It will be important to determine coursework that proves difficult for the students who struggle. Students who took vocational education courses during 1996-97 in those TOP codes for which the district receives VATEA funding (agriculture & natural resources, business & management, communications, computer information

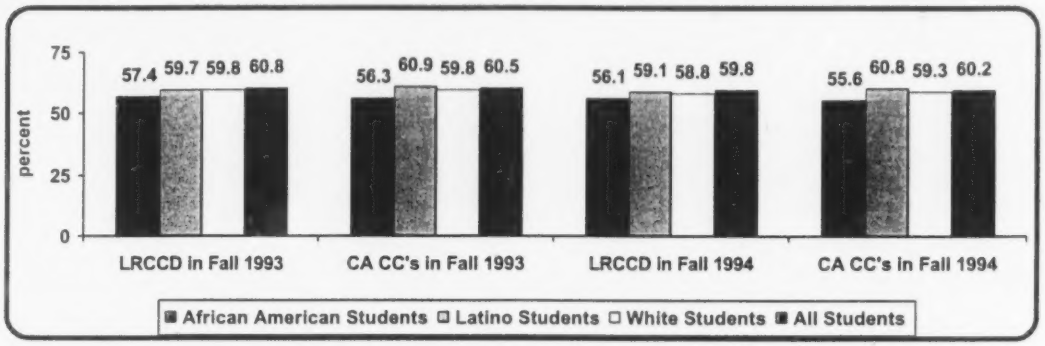
science, engineering, health and consumer & home economics), achieved success rates that were quite high (65% and higher). Analysis of the program review data generated by college researchers at the program and course level could tell us with which courses and/or with which academic disciplines students struggle.

Student Success – Persistence from Fall to Spring

* Even though some of the specific ethnic minority groups earn GPAs and achieve success rates that are substantially less than those of all students, they fair somewhat better in terms of their rates of persistence. Exactly 59.3% of all students persisted from Fall 1997 to Spring 1998. Latino and white students persist at almost the same rates (within 1%); Filipino and Pacific Islanders persisted at rates that were 2% higher, while Asians at rates 7% higher. African Americans and Native Americans persisted at rates that were 3% below those of all students. An important question to be address over the next year is whether these student groups are persisting *beyond* the second semester.

* Moreover, Fall 1993 and Fall 1994 persistence rates to the following Spring achieved by Los Rios students is almost exactly the same as those achieved statewide: for Latino, African American and white students (the only groups for which statewide data are available).

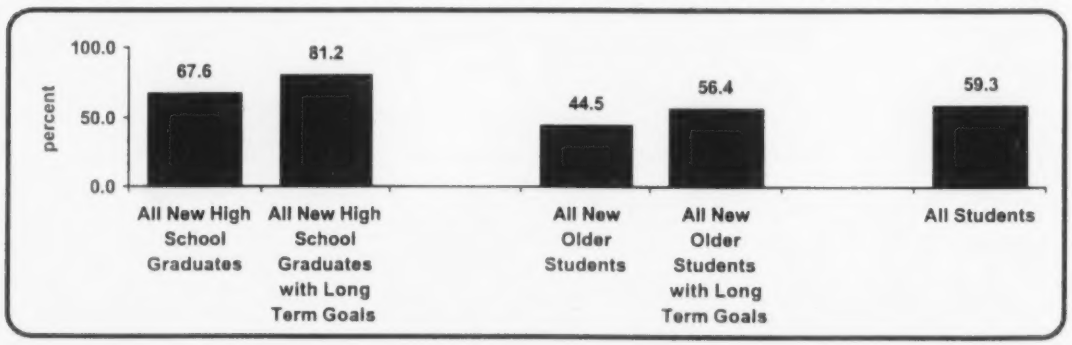
Chart 8
Fall to Spring Persistence Rates of Los Rios Students and All CA Community College Students: Fall 1993 and Fall 1994



* All new high school graduates persist at high rates (67.6%, fall 1997 to Spring 1998), and particularly those who have long term goals (to earn certificates or degrees or to transfer). Exactly 81.2% of new high school graduates with these long-term goals persisted from Fall 1997 to Spring 1998.

* Older students who are new persist at much lower rates (44.5%, Fall 1997 to Spring 1998); even those who have long term goals do not persist at high rates: 56.4% vs. 59.3% of all students. Initiatives to assist these older students who have long-term goals might be appropriate.

Chart 9
Fall to Spring Persistence Rates of New High School Graduates, New Older Students and All Students: Fall 1997 to Spring 1998

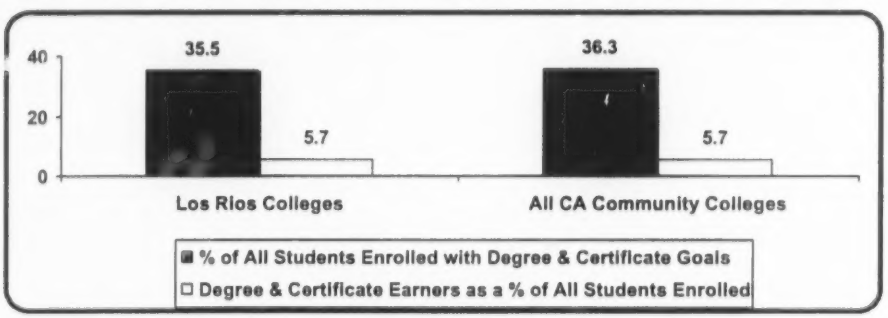


Student Success – Degree and Certificate Awards

- Awards earned by Los Rios college students are low. Even though an average of 20,300 students across the four Fall semesters for which goal data are available (1994-1997) said their goal was to earn a degree or certificate, only an average of 3,046 students actually earned degrees or certificates across the 1993-94 through the 1996-97 academic years. Although enrollment data are not directly comparable to awards data, these four-year averages do provide a relative means of comparison. This suggests that even though an average 38.9% of all Los Rios students enrolled each Fall had goals to earn degrees or certificates, only an average 5.8% of all students did so.

- Comparable state level data are only available for a two-year period (1993-94 and 1994-95). When two year averages are calculated for both Los Rios colleges and the state, the proportions are almost exactly the same: even though an average 36.3% of all students enrolled statewide said they had goals to earn degrees or certificates, only 5.7% of all students earned them that year. The comparable averages for Los Rios colleges across these same two years are 35.5% and 5.7%, respectively.

Chart 10
Proportions of Enrolled Students with Goals to Earn Degrees and Certificates & of Those Who Actually Earn Them : Two-Year Averages for All CA Community Colleges and Los Rios Community Colleges

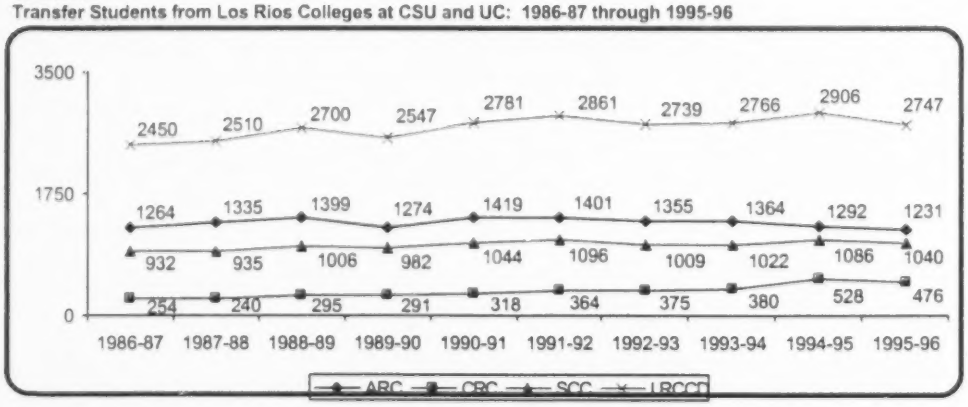


- The proportions of students by ethnicity that *do* earn degrees and certificates are similar to the proportions by ethnicity that are enrolled, with a couple of exceptions. The proportional differences are as follow: 3% fewer African Americans earn awards than the proportion enrolled; 2% fewer Latinos earn awards than the proportion enrolled; 2% more Asian students earn awards than the proportion enrolled; and 3% more white students earn awards than the proportion enrolled.

Student Success – Transfer

- Los Rios colleges continue to fair well in the number of transfer students who attend the California State University (CSU) and the University of California (UC). The total number of Los Rios students enrolled in both CSU and UC was 2,747 in 1995-96. New figures for 1996-97 will be analyzed upon release from CPEC during Fall 1998.

Chart 11
Transfer Students from Los Rios Colleges at CSU and UC: 1986-87 through 1995-96



- LRCCD continues to rank high among districts statewide in the number of transfers at CSU and UC. When analyzed by total transfers to both CSU and UC, Los Rios ranks second only to Los Angeles Community College District, a district that enrolls approximately 7.7% of all community college statewide enrollment and also accounts for almost the same proportion (7.2%) of transfers at CSU and UC. Los Rios enrolls approximately 3.9% of the statewide enrollment but accounts for 4.6% of the transfers. This Los Rios transfer proportion of 4.6% has fluctuated by less than 1% over a ten-year period through 1995-96.

Chart 12
California Community College Student Transfers by Rank Order of Districts with 900 or More Transfers: 1995-96

	TO UC AND CSU:		TO CSU:		TO UC:	
1	L.A.	4286	L.A.	3620	L.A.	666
2	**Los Rios**	**2747**	**Los Rios**	**2320**	Santa Monica	666
3	Coast	2394	Coast	1833	Foothill-De Anza	588
4	Foothill-De Anza	2173	Contra Costa	1650	Coast	561
5	Contra Costa	2161	N.Orange Co.	1600	Santa Barbara	539
6	San Diego	1917	Foothill-De Anza	1585	Contra Costa	511
7	N.Orange Co.	1896	State Center	1496	San Diego	430
8	Ventura	1642	San Diego	1487	**Los Rios**	427

- Although the number of ethnic minority transfers from Los Rios colleges has increased substantially from 1991-92 to 1995-96 (by 31.5%), most of that increase can be accounted for by the transfer of Asian students. There was only a 17.3% increase in student transfers of ethnic groups that are generally considered under-represented in higher education (African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans). The number of white student transfers at CSU and UC has declined over this same time period, by 12.2%.

Summary Comments

- If changes in the population that we have experienced since 1990 continue, the district may see more rather than fewer students who struggle academically.

- Faculty, administrators and classified staff of Los Rios Community College District may wish to devise or expand strategies to support ethnic minority students through their programs of study. An exception to this is those of Asian descent (excluding Filipino and Pacific Islander students), because these students do much better academically than the average student. From all indications, population growth will be of ethnic groups that have in past decades been minority. With the exception of the Asian students, it is exactly this group of students that struggles with at least certain aspects of their programs of study.

- Likewise, older new students who have never before enrolled in any college could use similar support systems.

- Specific areas of academic difficulty can be assessed through focus group meetings with students, faculty, counselors and staff and by analysis of program review data generated by college researchers.

- Also useful in support of this effort will be more comprehensive analysis by district researchers of data on new student cohorts (both older students and new high school graduates) that can be conducted during the remainder of 1998. Such analysis will be helpful in pinpointing problems that might be alleviated early rather than later in students' programs of study.

This executive summary of key issues for planning from the 1997 and 1998 Environmental Scans was written by Judith Beachler, Director. It is based on data generated and analyzed by the LRCCD research staff – Judith Beachler, Betty Glyer-Culver, Research Analyst and Minh La, Systems Hardware and Software Performance Analyst.

For further information please call: 916-568-3131 or e-mail – loc@mail.do.losrios.cc.ca.us, *LRCCD Office of Institutional Research.*

7/28/98 update (F97-S98 persistence) Scan98-plngsum.doc